



## Secrets of the Forest(Rewiting) by moonchild-things

**Category:** Stranger Things, 2016

**Genre:** Adventure, Drama

**Language:** English

**Characters:** Jonathan B., Nancy W., OC, Steve H.

**Pairings:** Jonathan B./OC, Nancy W./Steve H.

**Status:** In-Progress

**Published:** 2018-07-28 09:46:32

**Updated:** 2018-08-20 15:48:28

**Packaged:** 2019-12-12 22:36:56

**Rating:** T

**Chapters:** 5

**Words:** 18,476

**Publisher:** [www.fanfiction.net](http://www.fanfiction.net)

**Summary:** Sophie Hopper's the adopted daughter of Jim Hopper. With a hidden past, she tries to hide the trauma she has endured with snarky remarks and a smirk. She's best friends with Nancy Wheeler, Barbara Holland, and Jonathan Byers. However, when things start to turn upside down, Sophie's hurtled back into the life she thought she escaped. How will her friends react to her secrets?

# 1. Chapter One

## ESCAPE

**HER BLOOD RAN COLD AS SHE STOOD** in the abandoned corridor. Everyone had made it out, well almost everyone. She did see a few scientists who were attacked, all now dead. And she couldn't hear any of their heartbeats anymore meaning they were most certainly dead. The creature that she saw in her dreams... Had become real. And right now it was hunting her, she needed to hide somewhere. Just until it disappeared.

She ran down the corridor her wet bare feet pounding against the white tiled floor. Her clothes were still wet from her previous experiment. She could hear it, it didn't have a heartbeat per say... But she could still hear its snarls and grunts. Terrified she ran into an empty room to hopefully hide from the faceless creature. She sat against the opposite wall of the room, the door was opened only slightly. Letting in a sliver of light, she was afraid of closing it completely. The room she was in was the punishment room, a place she knew all too well. And if she was to close the door completely she was sure that she would go insane.

The sound of the monsters snarls and footfalls were heard in the hallway outside. She started to tremble at the sound, she saw what it could do to people. The people who were killed, in her opinion, got what they deserved. It killed them before she could muster enough courage to do it herself. The creature, although it frightened her, was her savior from a terrible place. Though now it seemed like it was hunting her down. Trying to kill her as well. And Ten was terrified.

She placed a hand on her mouth trying to quiet down her ragged breathing. Tears welled up in the corners of her eyes as she closed them trying to think of something else. Something that would calm her down, yet the only thing that would come to mind was Eleven.

Eleven was a small child who she considered to be her little sister. Even though they had only seen each other a few times in between experiments they bonded instantly. Eleven was four years younger than her, she protected her any way that she could, and she was glad

that Eleven wasn't here to see any of this. She was also glad that her other sister wasn't there to witness any of this.

The thumps of the faceless creatures footfalls grew closer to the ten-year-old girl. Fear bubbling up from within her as she held back a whimper that was trying to claw itself out from the back of her throat. Tears fell freely from her light green eyes as she shut them tightly. The thuds were getting closer and closer.

Thud... Thud... Thud... ...Silence.

She couldn't hear anything anymore. The entire hallway was silent like that creature had suddenly disappeared. Her heart pounded in her chest. She slowly crawled her way from the opposite wall to look outside into the hall. Mustering as much bravery she could she opened the door wider. And... Nothing.

There wasn't anything in the hall. The faceless creature was gone. Her eyes widened as she scrambled to her feet, this was it. She could get out, escape. Just the thought placed the ghost of a smile on her pale face. She quickly made it to the end of the hallway and was met with two different ways. One way could lead to her freedom, the other would condemn her to hell. There was no doubt that the other mean people were notified of what happened here, and if she wasn't quick enough they would get her. But where would she go!

Sounds of heavy footfalls filled the silent corridor. Her breath picked up as her heart stopped. Just choose a way! And so she did, running down the corridor to her left she sprinted as fast as her little legs could carry her. Shouts of people behind her filled her ears, they were getting closer.

"Subject Ten is out!"

She pushed herself to run faster as they sounded like they were closer. Taking a quick glance behind her she noticed that about a dozen guards were running after her with guns out and pointed towards her. Her eyes widened as she continued to run into what appeared to be the room that held the "bath" as she and Eleven called it.

There was also a small hole that was in the wall. Just big enough for someone as small as her to crawl through it. It looked to be completely pitch black in there. It gave Ten a terrible feeling, she knew that's where that faceless creature was, hiding, waiting.

Ignoring the hole Ten looked around frantically looking for some sort of way out, but she was at a dead end. The only way out appeared to be the hole.

"Ten!" Dr. Brenner yelled at him and the guards entered the room. Ten stared in horror, she wasn't getting out. She was trapped with these horrid people.

"Ten," Dr. Brenner said in a hushed and soft voice. Something that Ten had never heard from the man before. He was always abusive towards her, never in her life had she heard this tone towards her. Dr. Brenner had only ever been nice to Eleven. "It's alright Ten, that monster isn't going to hurt you. It's gone." He said as he approached her, her eyes welled up as she watched him reach a hand out to her. She flinched as he placed it on her shoulder trying to comfort her. She stared at him, her eyes filled with fear and confusion. Why was he comforting her, he never did that sort of thing to her. She thought he might have hit her for her escape attempt.

"Ten please we must get you back into your room. We don't want you to get hurt." He said placing a hand on her back trying to usher her in a certain direction. But Ten kept her feet planted to the best of her ability. Dr. Brenner stared at the small girl before trying to push her again, only earning the same response. "Ten." He said sternly to her kneeling down to her height. "Let's go."

Ten avoided looking into his eyes instead of focusing on her hands in front of her. "We are going to your room so you can rest." He said firmly staring straight at Ten, "so that you will be ready for our next test, alright Ten?" He said with more force to her standing up and trying to push her again only to have a searing pain run through his arm. He cried out in pain and pulled his arm back against himself and stared at it to see that it was turning a light purple and the veins in his body bulging out of his arm. In a way, it looked like it was bruised. But Ten didn't touch him to hurt him like that. He glared down at the little girl in front of her as she looked down at the

ground.

"No." She said softly glancing up at the man.

Dr. Brenner's stare hardened at the girl. "Ten," he said threateningly to her as he backed up from her still cradling his arm. This girl had always been trouble for him and their study. And her corruption had seemed to have infected Eleven as well. His eyes narrowed as he stared at the girl. He raised his hand, the one that wasn't bruised, ready to strike her.

Ten's eyes widened as she cowered backward slightly trying to get away from him. But she couldn't. And the back of his hand struck her cheek with a loud crack. Ten's head whipped to the other side as she yelped quietly. Dr. Brenner smirked slightly before standing straight.

"Take her back to her room," Brenner ordered the guards as one of them picked up Ten by her arms.

Ignoring the stinging pain in her cheek she fought against the guards holding her. She screamed out and thrashed against them hoping to make them lose their hold on her. But she didn't have as much strength as she is only ten-years-old. She was no match for their strength, but maybe just maybe she could use her... ability.

The guards continued to pull Ten out of the room and down the hall towards her room/cell. There was no way she was going let them keep her here in this hellish place. This was her time if she could just muster enough power she could escape.

Ten had stopped her thrashing and scream to focus on exerting enough energy to hurt the guards enough to have them let her go. Her breathing slowed as she focused on the heartbeats of the guards that dragged her. Their heartbeats thumped in her ears, there were three. They thumped at irregular speeds, one of these guards was obviously scared of Ten. Or maybe the idea of what she was capable of, well they were about to get a demonstration of what harm she really could cause.

She closed her eyes as she summoned the energy to cause harm to the guards. Her body started to shake slightly as blood started to drip

from her nose and ears. The guards had let go of her as they all clutched their chests as their hearts started to stop. Ten's eyes narrowed as she stared at the three who were leaning against the walls or on the ground convulsing in pain. They all gasped out trying to regain their breaths before they all stopped moving.

They were dead.

What she did would definitely gain the attention of someone, and soon more guards would appear. But without a second's thought, Ten bolted down the hallway passing many doors and windows that looked into many other rooms. Her feet pounded against the floor as she ran even further, but then she stopped. There was no way that she was going to get out through the front entrance, there would be people waiting for her at the entrance.

The only plausible exit she could think of was the hole.

She gulped before feeling for any heartbeats. There weren't any in the direction that she had to go, however, there was a couple behind her. Ten took off running again once she caught her breath enough to run. Her legs carried her as fast as they could as she ran back towards the bath.

She could hear more heartbeats pick up in pace, telling her that they were chasing after her. She didn't look back, not worried about what was behind her but instead in front of her. She ran around corners, through all of the bleak and white hallways till she stood in front of the bath.

There were many scientists in the room, most wearing hazmat suits because of the hole in the wall. The scientist stared in horror as one of their most successful and powerful experiments stood in front of them. They scrambled around the room, a few grabbing guns others contacting Dr. Brenner. Ten bolted past them, a few trying to grab her as she went past.

However, none of them could hold onto her for long, unless they wanted their whole body to be bruised. Her nose was bleeding profusely and she felt light-headed, but it was worth it if it meant her getting out.

She had finally made it to the hole, the dark abyss staring back at her as she could hear growls coming from inside of it. Ignoring the yells of the scientists in the room, Ten got down on her hands and knees and started to crawl through the hole.

"Ten!" She could hear Dr. Brenner's voice yell in frustration as she crawled to the other side. It was dark and damp. It felt like the energy had been sucked out of her once she entered. It looked like the room she was in before just covered in what looked like slime and vines. She could still hear the sounds of the scientist panicking on the other side. Though their yells seemed to be diminishing as well as the light. The hole was closing.

The light had finally diminished entirely. The hole was closed, and she was free from Dr. Brenner, but now she had no idea where she was. And whether or not she was safe.

She shakily stood up and took in her surroundings. It was dark, that was for sure and the room was covered in a slime like substance. Ten was exhausted and wanted nothing more than to sleep. But before she could find someplace to rest a low growl entered the room.

She was definitely not safe.

**Word Count: 2117**

**Written: 6/24/17**

## 2. Chapter Two

### MISSING

**"WILL! YOU'RE GOING TO FAST!" SOPHIE HOPPER** called out to the boy who was riding his bike further down the road. Her long black hair blowing in the wind due to her fast speed.

Said boy, Will Byers, turned slightly to look at his older friend. "If we don't hurry up we'll be late!" He laughed loudly in her direction looking backward before continuing to bike at his fastest speed. Sophie huffed before continuing to ride her own bike after the younger boy. Using all of her strength she pushed herself to pedal her bike faster, the downhill slope also helping her to catch up to Will. In one final push, Sophie caught up to Will and even passed him.

"Ha!" Sophie laughed as she started to slow down now that the two had reached their destination. Will followed after her as the two pulled into a driveway of a house at the end of the cul de sac. "How are you so fast?" Will asked breathlessly placing his bike down next to Sophie's. She smirked in response and ruffled his hair earning a yelp from him.

"I'm older that's why." She said smiling at the boy. He laughed before swatting her hand away.

"Come on we're late already, they might have started without us!" Will exclaimed as he ran through the garage and into the kitchen of the Wheeler's household. Once the two entered the home through the garage they both saw that Mr. Wheeler sat in the living room, laid out on his lazy boy watching whatever television show was on at the time. Mrs. Wheeler was sat on the couch near her husband as Holly, their youngest daughter, sat on her lap playing with one of her stuffed animals.

"Will, Sophie, the boys are already downstairs." Mrs. Wheeler said smiling towards the two, the two returned the smile before heading to the door of the basement.

"Thanks, Mrs. Wheeler." They said before heading down the stairs to

the basement.

Once the two were in the basement they saw three other boys Will's age. They were sat around a fold up table already setting up their game, Dungeons, and Dragons. "Sophie! Will! We were about to start without you." Mike Wheeler said smiling to his friends, Sophie waved her hand dismissively.

"Whatever, I know you wouldn't have started without Will, you need him." She said standing behind Mike's chair.

"Whatever, let's just get this started!" Lucas said as Will sat down at the folding table across from Mike.

"Hey, Mike is Nancy here?" Sophie asked as she leaned on the back of his chair.

"Yeah," he grumbled upset, "she's in her room studying or something." He answered her. He definitely didn't want Sophie, one of his best friends, to go upstairs and hang out with his older sister. He knew that Nancy and Sophie were pretty good friends, but he wanted to hang out with her now! He knew that this campaign was going to be long, meaning more time to hang out with Sophie.

"I'm going to go up there for a little bit," she replied as the boys groaned in protest. She rolled her eyes and smirked, "I know you'll miss my wonderful presence!" Sophie said as all the boys rolled their eyes at her as she headed her way over to the stairs. She chuckled slightly, "but knowing you guys this campaign is going to be long. I'll only be a minute, you're not my only friends you know." She said walking up the stairs of the Wheeler's basement towards the kitchen. The boys grumbled their dissatisfaction with her plan but continued setting up their game of dungeons and dragons.

Sophie walked from the kitchen, passing Karen, Ted, and Holly in the living room before walking up to the second story. Sophie walked up the last of the stairs to hear some pop music playing from Nancy's room. Sophie rolled her eyes at hearing the music.

There wasn't anything wrong with Nancy's choice in music, it was just not Sophie's cup of tea. She liked artists like AC/DC, The Smiths,

The Clash, David Bowie, Elton John and every once and awhile Michael Jackson. Sophie walked up to Nancy's door and knocked on it waiting for Nancy to open the door.

"Mike! If that's you I told you I don't want to-" Nancy started to say as she stood up from her bed to open her bedroom door. Instead of finding her younger, slightly annoying brother she found a girl in jeans, a white undershirt with a plaid overshirt. "Oh, hi Sophie," Nancy said as she turned back around to walk back to her bed.

"Hello," Sophie replied walking further into her friend's room and taking a seat on her bed beside her. Nancy had continued with her studying, writing out her flashcards for the upcoming test. "Man, Barb was right, you really are studying hard for this test," Sophie commented picking up a few of the flashcards on Nancy's bed only to have them pulled out of her hands by Nancy.

"Yes, I am. And I won't get distracted, even by you Soph." Nancy said pulling more cards out and writing on them.

Sophie pursed her lips and nodded her head sarcastically, "oh yes, that's true. I'm sure you're not going to get distracted." She said sarcasm dripping from her voice. "Not even by Steve Harrington." At Sophie's comment, Nancy stopped writing and looked up to her with narrowed eyes.

"Oh come one. You, Barb and I all know that something's up between you two. Whether you want to admit it is *not* my problem." Sophie said nonchalantly as she looked at Nancy's science book. Nancy sighed before abandoning her science work knowing that her friend was going to keep pestering her.

"No there is not anything going on between me and Steve, we just talk..." Nancy said before earning a pointed look from Sophie. "Well, we do more than talk sometimes. But! It's not like there is anything else between us." Nancy defended herself, "at the end of the day he's still popular boy Steve Harrington and I'm just... Nancy Wheeler." Nancy sighed before laying down on her bed in exasperation.

Sophie stared at Nancy for a moment with an eyebrow raised towards her waiting to see if she was done talking. "You know that's not true."

Sophie said running a hand through her hair, "Steve's lucky to have someone like you to hang around with." She started as Nancy used her elbows to prop herself up to stare at Sophie. "You're not like one of those sluts that he always hangs out with or anything. You actually have standards." Sophie said seriously before a smirk crept onto her face. "But then again we're talking about Steve so your standards must be pretty low." Sophie joked earning a shove from Nancy, "but still he's lucky. I can't really tell you to not hang out with him, no matter how much I hate him." Nancy laughed slightly before laying back down on her back. "But it's your own life. You do whatever you want, your smart, pretty, always positive. His name might be known around the school, but so is yours and it's not for the same reasons. You're known for your intelligence and kindness. Him he's just a bed jumper. Just don't let him change you, okay?" Sophie finished her little speech with a shrug of her shoulders.

"You always know what to say don't you?" Nancy laughed covering her face with her hands trying to hide her smile.

Sophie's smirk widened as she ruffled her hair, "I do don't I?" She asked cockily.

Nancy laughed, "but you're no better." she said with a teasing tone sitting up as Sophie's eyes narrowed.

"I have no idea what you talking about Nancy, now weren't you studying?" She asked trying to avoid the conversation she knew Nancy desperately wanted to have.

"Oh come on, I'm not denying anything about me and Steve," Nancy said earning a pointed glare from Sophie. "Okay, well not everything, but at least I can say I am at least somewhat interested in him. You, missy, are in full denial!" Nancy laughed.

"Again, I don't know what you're talking about."

"Oh come on!" Nancy laughed loudly. "You and Jonathan hang out with each other any chance you get!"

Sophie scoffed. "Just because two people of the opposite sex hang out with each other doesn't mean they like each other." She said matter

of factly crossing her arms over her chest. "Jon and I are really good friends, we like the same things and both hate the same people," Sophie said as her eyes narrowed towards Nancy.

"But still, Sophie Byers has a nice ring to it." Nancy teased with a hand on her chin in thought.

Sophie scoffed again before hitting Nancy with a pillow. And covering her face with her hands trying to hide the blush creeping up on her face.

Nancy swatted the pillow away and laughed again before suggesting that they study. Sophie had reluctantly agreed seeing as she needed to study for the test as well.

The two girls studied for hours. Quizzing each other on the subject relentlessly until the two could answer each question without a second thought. Sophie's brain was so tired from all the work that she had fallen asleep after Nancy had gotten a call from Barb.

The boys had just been forced to stop their latest campaign by Mrs. Wheeler. Dustin had taken the last pizza slice up to Nancy's room to see if either girl wanted it. When he arrived in the doorway of Nancy's bedroom he saw Sophie laying on the bed obviously asleep. Nancy was on her phone talking to Barb, "hey, Nancy. There's a slice left if you want it. Sausage and pepperoni!"

Nancy glanced up at the boy before pausing her conversation on the phone and getting up from her bed. Slightly stirring Sophie, Nancy walked over to the door and closed it on the younger boy. Dustin stood for a second before closing the pizza box and heading back down the stairs towards the garage where the other boys were. "There's something wrong with your sister," Dustin said as he came out of the house munching on the last slice of pizza.

Mike furrowed his eyebrows, "what are you talking about?" He asked Dustin.

"She's got a stick up her butt." He explained to Mike picking up his bike.

"Yeah. It's because she's been dating that douchebag, Steve Harrington." Lucas agreed with Dustin.

"Yeah, she's turning into a real jerk, I don't know why Sophie always hangs out with her. And Sophie fell asleep by the way." Dustin said.

"Nancy's always been a real jerk," Mike said as the boys turned on the lights on their bikes.

"Nuh-uh, she used to be cool." Dustin started to say as him and Lucas started to ride off on their bikes. "Like that time she dressed up with Sophie as an elf for our Elder tree campaign."

"Four years ago!" Mike exclaimed as the two started their ride down the driveway.

"Just saying," Dustin said.

"Later," Lucas called out following Dustin.

Will then came over to stand beside Mike. "It was a seven." He said.

"Huh?" Mike asked as he looked to one of his best friends.

"The roll, it was a seven. The Demogorgon, it got me. See you tomorrow. And tell Sophie that I went home on my own, she doesn't need to worry about me, I'll be fine."

Sophie had volunteered to take Will back home before they arrived at the Wheeler's house. The reason was that Jonathan had told her that he was taking a longer shift than expected to get extra money for his family.

Being a good friend, Sophie agreed to take Will home and look after him until either Joyce or Jonathan got back home, that and she didn't want him to ride alone. But with said teen now sleeping on Nancy's bed it didn't seem like that was going to happen. Will would just have to ride home on his own. However, no one would believe what actually happened to Will Byers that night.

"Sophie," Nancy said shaking the sleeping girl. Sophie didn't wake up, she only rolled onto her side, burying herself deeper into Nancy's

sheets. Nancy sighed before crossing her arms over her chest before she smirked slightly.

She crossed her bedroom over to her radio that sat on her dresser. She pressed the on button to her radio allowing the song '*I'm still standing*' by Elton John to blare through her speakers.

Sophie groaned as she covered herself with blankets and pillows trying to shield herself from the music. Nancy laughed as she danced slightly to the music before ripping the covers off of Sophie. "No!" Sophie exclaimed tiredly as she reached for the comfy blankets. Nancy rolled her eyes.

"Come on Soph, school starts in like an hour," Nancy said crossing her arms over her chest. Sophie looked up to Nancy with half-lidded eyes, still tired.

"What?" She asked groggily sitting up in the bed before glancing out the window to see that the sun had risen. "Shit!" Sophie exclaimed before trying to stand up from the bed quickly, which only resulted in her falling to the ground becoming tangled in the blankets.

Sophie groaned as Nancy laughed seeing her friend in a pile of limbs and covers on the ground. "Come on, mom's making breakfast," Nancy said as she walked out of her room, Sophie following shortly after untangling herself from the blankets and going downstairs.

"Morning mom," Nancy greeted her mother as the two teens entered the kitchen where Mr. Wheeler and Mike already sat around the kitchen table.

"Hi, Mrs. Wheeler sorry about crashing here I didn't realize I fell asleep last night," Sophie said as she sat in the chair beside Mike.

"It's no problem, Sophie," Karen smiled before picking up Holly.

"Mike," Sophie started gaining the attention of the younger boy. "Did Will leave last night, him and I agreed that I'd ride home with him last night, but uh, I didn't," Sophie explained with a sheepish grin.

"Yeah, Will left with Dustin and Lucas. I don't think he wanted to wake you up." Mike said with a shrug of his shoulders as a plate of

eggs and toast were placed in front of the both of them.

"Oh, sweet kid. But I still wish someone woke me up so I could ride with him," Sophie said as she started stuffing some eggs into her mouth. "I don't always trust him riding through the woods to his house alone," Sophie explained her voice trailing off.

"This is Hawkins, what's the worst that could happen?" Mike asked with a goofy smile, Sophie tried to return the smile to the best of her ability. But there was a feeling in her stomach about Will, she didn't know what happened to him, but she knew it wasn't good.

"Yeah, guess you're right Mike."

Mike reached for the syrup that was on the table before pouring some of it onto his eggs. A strange combination, but delicious to Mike nonetheless. Nancy's nose wrinkled in disgust as she stared at her brother who started eating his syrup covered eggs. Just then the phone started to ring.

"That's disgusting." She commented eating her own breakfast.

"You're disgusting." Mike countered back as Karen picked up the phone as she held Holly on her hip.

"Hello?" Karen asked.

"Hi, Karen. It's Joyce." Joyce responded as Mike poured syrup onto both Nancy and Sophie plate.

Sophie made a noise of protest as Nancy exclaimed, "what the hell, Mike?!"

"Quiet!" Karen scowled at the three kids at the table as did Ted.

"Was that Will I heard back there?" Joyce asked.

"Will? No, no, no, it's just Mike." Karen told her.

"Will didn't spend the night?"

"No, he left here a little bit after 8:00. Why? He's not home?"

"Um, you know what? I think he just left early for... for school. Thank you so much."

"Okay."

"Bye."

"Bye."

Sophie shrugged her shoulders before taking a bite of the syrup covered eggs only to find that it had a weird yet good taste. "Hmm, not bad," Sophie smirked looking to see Mike smiling and Nancy rolling her eyes.

The call ended leaving a slightly confused Karen and a concerned Joyce who shared worried glances with her older son, Jonathan. Will wasn't over the Wheeler's house or at home. So where the hell was Will Byers?

"I have to stop by my house to pick up my bag," Sophie said as she finished her breakfast picking up her plate and placing it on the counter. "I'll see you at school Nance, see ya Wheelers!" Sophie said as she ruffled Mike's hair before heading to the front door hearing goodbyes from the family in the kitchen.

Sophie rode down the street on her bike heading to the house that she and Jim live in. Jim Hopper adopted Sophie nearly four years ago. Two years after she was found on the side of the road, she was only ten then. As she rode up to the house she saw that Jim was just coming out of it. Clad in his uniform obviously ready for work.

Jim had just come out of his house when he heard the sound of tires on the gravel road. He looked up to see Sophie riding up towards him on her bike.

"And where have you been?" He said as she came to stop in front of him.

"Sorry Jimmy, I was over Nancy's the other day and fell asleep. I just came back to grab my school bag." She explained quickly to him as she placed her bike down to grab her bag from inside. Jim waited patiently with a cigarette in his mouth for Sophie to come back out.

"Why are you still here? Shouldn't you be at the station?" Sophie said as she came back over to get on her bike again. Jim chuckled lightly resting his hands on his waist.

"Mornings are for-"

Sophie rolled her eyes and smirked, "coffee and contemplation." She mocked Jim.

He only pouted lightly ruffling her hair as she walked by him. Earning a yelp from the teen as she tried to tame her unruly black hair. "You should be at school."

"Yeah, yeah old man, I'm going." She muttered mounting her bike again. "See ya, Jimmy!" She said to him as she started to bike off away from him with her bag slung over her shoulders waving to him. Jim chuckled at how she acted before climbing into his car driving towards the station.

Sophie arrived in front of the high school, setting her bike on the rack and heading inside. The halls were filled with teens. Sophie was trying to fight her way through the wave of kids trying to find her two best friends.

She finally found them as Nancy was trying to open her locker and Barb stood next to her. "If you become friends with Tommy H. or Carol-" Barb started to say before was cut off by their sarcastic friend.

"You become friends with them I'll have no problem with beating some sense into you," Sophie said as she came to stand in between the other two teens. "And you know I can beat your ass like this." She continued snapping her fingers.

"Oh, that's gross!" Nancy said glancing at both Sophie and Barb. "Okay, I'm telling you, what happened between me and Steve was a one-time..." Nancy started only for Barb and Sophie to raise their eyebrows towards her. Both sharing the same smug, knowing look. "Two-time thing," Nancy admitted as Barb chuckled slightly and Sophie rolled her eyes.

Nancy continued to go through her locker until she noticed a folded

up piece of paper at the bottom of her locker. She picked it up unfolded it and read it to herself.

"Meet me. Bathroom, Steve." Sophie read aloud over Nancy's shoulder, she gasped dramatically, "lover boy's writing notes to you now, oh how sweet!" She mocked in a sarcastic voice earning a nudge from Nancy.

"You were saying?" Barb asked as Nancy pressed her lips together to hide her smile.

"Right well, you have fun with Steve doing... whatever." Sophie said to Nancy wiggling her eyebrow, "but I have History class to get to." She said as she started to back up from her friends with a two-fingered salute.

"See you in Chem, Soph," Nancy said as she and Barb waved and Barb headed off to her first class of the day and Nancy headed to the bathroom to meet Steve.

Gym, Sophie's favorite subject. Scratch that, second favorite, science always comes first. But on this subject, she didn't have to use much brain power. All she had to worry about was making sure that she didn't make a fool of herself in front of everyone. She was considered a bit of a freak because she was friends with Jonathan.

Though she didn't care about what people thought about her. she could actually be pretty protective over Jonathan, or her other friends for that matter. She tended to show up in Jim's office with cuts and bruises littering her skin because of a fight with someone who insulted Jonathan. But her opponent usually looked worse.

They were lining up outside on the track. She was wearing her running shoes, AC/DC band shirt, and shorts, her usual gym clothes. Running track wasn't Sophie's favorite thing to do, but it would suffice when compared to math class or even health class. Besides Sophie gets to see Jonathan every once and a while when his photography class allows him to walk around the field to take pictures. And today, which was Monday, Jonathan was allowed outside to take pictures. Unless he was in the dark room.

But as Sophie ran around the track she couldn't see Jonathan anywhere. And she was sure he was going to be out there today. Guess she was wrong. Slightly disappointed, Sophie focused on running, seeing as she had nothing else to do at the moment.

Running somewhat calmed her down. All she focused on was her breathing and her feet, just so she didn't fall down on her ass. Again. If it's one thing that she hates in the world, it's being embarrassed. She had a sarcastic, slightly arrogant and cocky exterior, and she hated when people found her weaknesses and used them to their advantage.

You should never show weakness, especially in a cruel world like this. Sophie knew how people liked to take advantage of others for their own gain no matter who they had to hurt. She learned that lesson at a young age, and she knew how to hide her weaknesses.

Running cleared her mind, and allowed her to think more. Though her mind tended to wander to things she wishes to forget. She never really had control over what she thought while running. She sort of just contemplating life. And how shitty it all is. Or the occasional thought about Jonathan here and there.

Today her mind focused on him. Entirely. She didn't think about her past or anything like she had done before, instead, she thought about her friend and his little brother. The day was almost over and she didn't see him in English class or History. Where the hell was Jonathan? Then the thought of Will popped into her head. She felt bad for leaving him on his own. It wasn't that Sophie didn't trust Will, it was what she feared in the woods she didn't trust.

Sophie walked into the girl's locker room. Sweating and out of breath, she changed out of her gym clothes and back into her normal clothes for the day. As she was putting her clothes away their principal came into the room.

"Sophie Hopper." She said simply causing everyone's head to snap in Sophie's direction. Sophie's eyebrows furrowed as she finished putting her stuff away.

"Whatever happened, I didn't do it. I haven't been in a fight in over a

week." Sophie said as she followed the principal out of the locker room and into the hall. Once she exited the hall she found Jim standing with Officer Callahan. "Uh, hi?"

Jim nodded his head at Sophie before grabbing her arm and starting to pull her towards the principal office so they could talk in private. "I swear, I haven't done anything, Jimmy!"

"I don't believe you. But this is about something else," he said as they entered the office. "I just need to talk to you about Will Byers," Jim said as Sophie sat down on one of the chairs near the desk as Jim stood above her.

"Will? What about Will?" She asked with furrowed eyebrows until her features softened. "Is he okay?" She asked as concern flooded her voice.

"You think something happened to him?" Jim asked as he sat in the chair next to her. He was here at the high school to see if Sophie knew anything about where Will might be. Jim knew that she spent a lot of time with the kid and his older brother. Might as well as start his investigation with his own daughter. Afterward he would go to the middle school to talk to Will's other friends.

"I- well," Sophie started. "Last night we were at Mike's house, I rode with him there cause I never really trust him on his own out near the woods." She explained as she rubbed her face with her hands. "After a while, Will and the other boys left. And we agreed that I'd ride with him back home because it would be dark out by the time the boys finished their game." She sighed as she looked up at her father. "But I feel asleep by accident, Mike told me Will didn't want to wake me up, said he would be fine on his own before leaving." Sophie's knee started to bounce out of nerves. "You don't think something's happened to him? I just hate the fact that I let him go by himself. He could be lost, o-or stuck somewhere."

Jim placed a hand on Sophie's shoulder seeing her starting to freak out. He's been there for her every time she's had a breakdown, and from the way she was acting, he could tell she would have one soon. "Hey, hey Sophie. I'm sure he's fine. Probably just lost in the woods like you said, he'll turn up eventually."

"The woods," Sophie muttered to herself. "That's what I'm worried about."

"Do you know what way he takes to get home at all?" Callahan inquired.

Sophie rubbed her temple as she thought of what the boys called the road. "There's a road that Will usually takes as a shortcut, I forget where it is. I never went down that way we always took the long way to his house. The road just always gave me the creeps." She said quickly.

"Don't worry kid, we'll talk with his friends down at the middle school see if they know anything." He said with a reassuring smile and pat on her shoulder. "Why don't you come with us, just to help us out."

"I'd be really happy to leave school early under any other circumstance, I'll come. You need all the help you can get."

**Word Count: 4506**

**Completed: 6/8/17**

### 3. Chapter Three

#### SEARCHING

**THE THREE OF THEM HEADED TO THE** middle school. Spoke with the principal and went to find Mike, Dustin, and Lucas. After finding the three boys in the AV room they were all lead into the principal's office.

The three boys sat on the couch that was in the principal's office. Sophie sat on the right arm of the couch next to Lucas. As Jim and Callahan sat across from the four kids in chairs.

The boys were talking over each other after Jim asked them about where Will was last night. "Okay. Okay. Okay." Jim said silencing the three boys, "One at a time, all right? You."

"His name is Mike, Jimmy," Sophie said with a sigh running a hand through her hair

"Mike." Jim corrected. "You said he takes what?"

"Mirkwood." Mike clarified what he said.

"Mirkwood?"

"Yeah." He said as the other two boys nodded their heads. "Will takes it when Sophie isn't riding with him." Sophie nodded her head as she supported it with her hands and her elbows rested on her knee.

"Have you ever heard of Mirkwood?" Jim asked turning to Callahan.

"I have not. That sounds made up to me."

"No, it's from Lord of the Ring." Lucas specified.

"Well, the Hobbit," Dustin said.

"It doesn't matter," Lucas said turning to Dustin slightly annoyed.

"He asked!" Dustin exclaimed.

*"He asked!"* Lucas mocked.

The boys then started to bicker amongst themselves forgetting the topic at hand. "Guys! Guys! Shut up!" Sophie said hitting each on the back of the head. Jim nodded his head in thanks towards the girl before turning his attention back to the three boys.

"One at a damn time!" Jim reminded as he leaned on his knees. "Mike."

"Mirkwood, it's a real road. It's just the name that's made up." Mike started to explain. "It's where Cornwallis and Kerley meet."

"Yeah, all right, I think I know that-" Jim said leaning back into his chair looking at Callahan.

"We can show you if you want." Mike cut him off.

"I said that I know it!" Jim said slightly frustrated.

"We can help look," Mike said determinedly.

"He's right you know." Sophie agreed with the younger boy, only to earn a glare from Jim.

"No."

Sophie and the boys started to speak at the same time coming up with reasons that they would be able to help out with the search for Will.

"No. After school, you are all to go home. Immediately." He said looking at each of the kids in front of him. "That means no biking around looking for your friend, no investigating, no-nonsense." He said as he stared at Sophie.

She bites her tongue keeping in a sarcastic and snarky remark to herself before she made the situation worse. "This isn't some Lord of the Rings book."

"The Hobbit." Dustin clarified.

"Shut up!" Lucas said before hitting Dustin on the knee. And now the boys were hitting each other while Mike sat in the middle of them.

"Do I make myself clear?" Jim asked softly as the boys stopped their fighting. Jim then stood up over the boys causing them to sit straighter in their seats. "Do I make myself... clear?"

The boys nodded their heads, "Yes, sir."

Jim looked at Sophie who sat with her hand covering her mouth as she stared off into space. In her own world, thinking about how *She* could look for Will. "Sophie," Jim said breaking her out of her trance.

"We'll negotiate it in a minute." She said simply after a small pause.

Jim's jaw clenched slightly as he turned to the principal. "We're done here." He said as he motioned for Sophie to follow him. The six of them left the office. Dustin, Lucas, and Mike heading back to class and Officer Callahan, Jim and Sophie heading towards the exit of the school. "Callahan, head out to the van and call Powell. We'll need his help if we're searching for the Byers kid." Callahan nodded before heading out the double doors and to the van calling Officer Powell.

"Listen I know what you're going to say, Jimmy." Sophie started as he turned to her with a hard look. "But I know the woods better than anyone, am I scared as shit by it? Yes. But one of my best friends is in trouble." She said sternly returning a heated glare just like Jim.

"But I'm not having you get hurt-" Jim started but was cut off by Sophie.

"I can handle myself just fine Jimmy, I've proven that I can fight quite well already haven't I?" Sophie asked with a slight smirk.

"Just because you can win a few fights against some kids doesn't mean you can fight against the person who might have kidnapped Will," Jim said defiantly.

"Dad," Sophie said with a serious look.

Jim's eyes widened slightly before returning back to narrow slits. Sophie never called her 'Dad' unless it was something serious. Or if

she wanted something. Though one of her friends disappearing is quite a serious situation in any case and he could tell that she desperately wanted to help look for him.

"I'm not sure what happened to Will, but I'm going to find out. Not just for me, but for his friends, his mom, and his brother." Sophie started as she stood taller. "And if I go alone to investigate that's fine, but I'm not going to stop." She said with a slight growl in her voice.

Seeing the seriousness and determination in Sophie's eyes Jim could tell that there was going to be no way to change her mind now. Jim sighed before rolling his eyes and heading out of the school doors. "Fine." He grumbled as Sophie followed closely behind.

Sophie fist bumped the air and did a mini victory dance before following after Jim to the van. "She's coming with us Chief?" Callahan asked looking at the overjoyed yet serious Sophie in the backseat. Sophie raised an eyebrow opening her mouth to sarcastically respond.

"Yes, she's coming. Tell Powell to meet us on Cornwallis." Jim demanded as Sophie rolled her eyes and Jim started to dive out of the school parking lot.

They drove for a while longer until they got to Mirkwood. The four of them got out of their cars and walked down the road, shouting Will's name. Sophie stared at the woods, memories resurfacing from the back of her mind where she so desperately tried to hide them. But she pushed them away and ignored them, for Will. Hopefully, he wasn't where she thinks he is. If he is, there's a chance that he could be dead.

Sophie walked the side of the road looking into the tree-lined woods, looking for any sign of her missing friend. Out of the corner of her eye, she saw something lying on the ground. Sophie walked over to it and found a black bike. *Will's* bike. "Jimmy!" Sophie yelled to gain the attention of Jim running down of the road to the bike.

Jim rushed over to where she was to see the bike that was in front of her. Soon the other two officers walked over as well. "That his bike?" Callahan asked.

"Yes, it is," Sophie said slowly as she walked a little further to examine the ground to see if she could find footprints of any kind.

"He must have crashed," Jim observed as he picked up the bike.

"You think he got hurt in the fall?" Callahan asked.

"Not so hurt he couldn't walk away. Bike like this is like a Cadillac to these kids. He would've walked it home." Jim said as he picked up the bike and the four of them looked around for any sign of Will.

"Where the hell are you Will?" Sophie muttered to herself as she looked around nervously.

Jim loaded up the bike into the back of the truck while Sophie hopped into the front seat. Officers Powell and Callahan got into the cruiser and made their way to the Byers' household. Where they were going to return the bike and check to see if any clues were left there.

Sophie sat in the front seat of the car with her head on the window watching the scenery pass by. Jim looked over to see the blank look on Sophie's face and cleared his throat. "Sophie, I promise you we'll find Will." He said trying to make her feel better.

"I hope." She mumbled emotionless while still looking out the window.

They finally pulled up to the Byers house. Sophie could see the distraught and stressed looks on Joyce and Jonathan's faces. She sighed before jumping out of the truck and followed after Jim who was carrying Will's bike. They were lead into the house, Jonathan gave Sophie a confused look while she entered but she just gave him a weak reassuring smile.

"We found Will's bike in the woods," Jim explained as the door closed behind him.

"It was just lying there?" Joyce asked slightly panicked wondering why Will left his bike in the woods.

"Yeah. Cal?" Jim said motioning Officer Powell to look in the kitchen for any clues of any sort.

"Did it have any blood on it, or-" Joyce started to say only to be cut off by Sophie.

"No, no, no blood," Sophie said swallowing thickly glancing at Jonathan and his mother.

"Phil?" Jim said as he motioned for Officer Callahan to look in the living room.

"If you found the bike out there, why are you here?" Jonathan asked Jim as Sophie stood next to Jonathan, while Jim looked around the kitchen.

"Well, he had a key to the house, right?"

"Yeah," Jonathan responded.

"So... maybe he came home."

"You think I didn't check my own house?" Joyce stammered out.

"I'm not saying that," Jim said as he observed a small hole that was in the wall closest to the back door. "Has this always been here?" He asked running his hand over the hole.

"What? I don't know. Probably. I mean, I have two boys. Look at this place."

Jim then opened the door showing that the door handle fits perfectly in the hole in the wall. "You're not sure?"

Joyce sighed before the Byers dog barked outside gaining the attention of Jim and Joyce who ventured outside to see why the dog was barking. Leaving the two teenage friends alone in the house. "So you're helping Hop?" Jonathan asked Sophie.

Sophie nodded her head and wrapped her arms around herself like she suddenly became cold. "Yeah, Will's one of my best friends. I gotta help any way I can, right?" She asked with a slight chuckle. Jonathan observed her. To him, she definitely didn't look the same, like the life had been sucked out of her. Instead of being the snarky, sarcastic and slightly arrogant girl he loved. She looked vulnerable

and dare he say scared, something Jonathan had never seen from his friend. "I just... I can't help but think this was my fault." She said in a small voice with her eyebrows furrowed.

Jonathan stared at her for a second before pulling her into a hug. "How's this your fault, Soph?" He asked her calmly.

"I told you that I would look after him until your shift was over, Jon. But I fell asleep at the Wheelers if I didn't then this wouldn't have happened." Sophie explained as her voice cracked and her eyes welled up with tears.

Jonathan's arms tightened around her trying to calm her down. He whispered reassuring things to her as the two still stood on their embrace.

Joyce came back in with their dog to feed him. The two teens sprung apart from their embrace and stood awkwardly next to each other. Joyce gave them a curious look before brushing it off and continuing to feed their dog.

Jonathan and Sophie moved to sit on the couch. Sophie played with her hair absentmindedly as for the first time in their four years of friendship Sophie and Jonathan sat silently. Never had that happened, they always had something to talk about. Whether it was about Jonathan's photography and his pictures or about school or Sophie's latest fight. They always had something to talk about. But they weren't in a talking mood.

Sophie started to feel light headed as she leaned back against the couch taking in a deep breath. Chills ran down her spine and a wave of nausea swept over her as she tried to keep herself awake. Her vision became blurry and black dots littered her sight. Her ears started to ring, she couldn't hear anything. Not even Callahan calling her name. It wasn't until Jonathan nudged her in her side that she could see and hear somewhat better. She let out a breath that she didn't know she was holding in.

She knew this feeling.

"Little Hopper." Callahan said impatiently gaining the attention of

Sophie who turned around to face him, "where's your dad?"

"Um, outside. He went outside." Sophie said swallowing thickly before placing a hand over her face earning a worried glance from Jonathan who placed a hand on her shoulder.

Callahan nodded his head before heading out the back door. Sophie's head started to throb as she placed one of her hands on her temple to hopefully lessen the pain. "Soph?" Jonathan asked his friend as he watched her shake slightly and breathing heavily with her hand on her temple rubbing it. "Are you okay?" He asked again still not receiving a reply. "Sophie!" Jonathan said again placing both of his hands on her shoulders.

Sophie's shaking stopped as she calmed her breathing down. Her vision became clear again as she could see Jonathan sitting in front of her. "Soph?" He asked worriedly.

"I'm fine Jon." She answered focusing her eyes on his worried look. "I just had a... headache is all." She explained with a nervous laugh, she was still dizzy and her stomach was still churning. But Sophie knew what just happened to her, and she's terrified.

It was back.

Jonathan eyes her skeptically before sighing. "Just making sure that you're okay."

Jim came back into the house in a hurry. He knew something wasn't right about any of this. He had a nagging feeling in the back of his mind telling him that this didn't feel right. Walking into the livingroom Jim noticed that Sophie was sitting on the couch. Jonathan had both of his hands on her shoulders as he spoke quietly to her. Jim couldn't hear what he was saying, but he could see that Sophie looked pale and was shaking. "Sophie, you okay?" He asked her.

Sophie and Jonathan jumped slightly at the sudden appearance of Jim. "huh? Uh yeah." Sophie said trying to convince him. Jim's eyes narrowed as he looked at her, she obviously wasn't okay.

"We're heading out now to get a search party together," Jim explained as Joyce came back into the room.

"Are we stopping at the station first, or are we going right out to the woods?" Sophie asked.

"We're going to the station then down by Mirkwood. *You* are going home." Jim said.

"What? But I'm going to help." Sophie said defiantly before standing up. At the sudden movement, she swayed slightly, nearly falling over if it wasn't for Jonathan who held onto her waist and steadied her.

"No. You're obviously not okay and I'm not having you wander around the woods." He said strongly.

"What, why?! I'm not staying home while you guys go out. Besides I won't be alone." Argued Sophie despite her sickly appearance. Jonathan stood up, seeing that Sophie was having a hard time standing on her own. He supported her waist while Sophie leaning onto his side. Jim stared at the two for a moment before clearing his throat.

"Doesn't matter. You being in the woods isn't a good combination anyway, I'm not bringing you out there only to have a panic attack!" Jim said in a strong voice, telling Sophie that his decision was final.

"Why doesn't Soph stay here instead of going out?" Jonathan suggested after a moment of silence.

Sophie stared at the side of Jonathan's head with narrowed eyes. Jim stared at Jonathan as well with a thoughtful look. "Would that be okay Joyce?" Jim asked turning to said woman.

"Yeah, yeah that's fine," Joyce replied with a small smile of reassurance.

Sophie fumbled over her words trying to find the right response to what they just agreed to but was cut off from even saying something. "Stay here Sophie, that's an order, no going out on your own either. I'll be back later to come get her." Jim said directing his last statement to Joyce. Sophie rolled her eyes and muttered a few

profanities under her breath but otherwise stayed quiet.

Hearing the tone in Jim's voice meant that there was no room for discussion. Even though Jim and Sophie weren't related by blood, they both had similarities to each other. Especially their stubbornness. The two could argue for hours about something and neither one of them would budge. Even though she really wanted to argue with him and try to persuade him she didn't want to argue in front of Joyce and Jonathan.

Sophie's jaw clenched as she resisted the urge to make a snarky comment as Officer Powell, Officer Callahan, and Jim left the small house. "Come on you still look sick," Jonathan said as he leads her down the hallway to his bedroom.

"Jon I said I'm... fine." Sophie said as she swayed slightly on her feet. Jonathan looked at her as the two stopped in the door frame of his room. Sophie pressed her lips together looking at him too. She sighed, "okay so I may be slightly dizzy, but besides that, I can still go out and look for Will."

Jonathan helped Sophie sit on his bed while he sat down next to her. "Soph, you're not the only one who wants to go out and look for Will." He started. "Hopper is just making sure that you're okay. You and I both know how you get around the woods." He said wrapping an arm around her shoulders. Sophie tensed slightly before relaxing into his embrace, she rested her head into the crook of his neck.

"Doesn't matter if I have a panic attack, what matters is finding Will, and we need all the help we can get," Sophie said. Jonathan's breath hitched as he shivered slightly feeling Sophie's breath fanning over his neck. Jonathan licked his lips, a nervous act, as his cheeks started to heat up slightly. "This shouldn't of happened to Will if anything it should be me in his place."

That statement caused Jonathan to pull away slightly from Sophie and stare at her in disbelief. Jonathan is devastated that his brother is missing as it is. But imagining Sophie in Will's place is just as bad. His best friend... gone, him having no idea where she was. He'd spend every waking moment trying to find her. "Don't say that Soph." He told her softly as he tightened his arm around her shoulders.

"But it's true!" Sophie exclaimed loudly breaking away from his embrace. Jonathan stared at her with wide eyes. "Sorry," She apologized in a small voice.

Jonathan sighed before pulling her into a tight hug. Resting his head in the crook of her neck he stayed silent as he held her. "No Soph, it isn't and it isn't your fault. If anything it's mine. Will's my responsibility, I should have been home."

Sophie sighed closing her eyes leaning into Jonathan as she became drowsy due to his warmth. She felt so safe in his arms, she didn't know why. But it left a fuzzy feeling in her stomach that she hadn't felt before or with anyone else, and she kind of liked it. Seeing Sophie's breathing become slower and her becoming limp in his arms, Jonathan let her go. Sophie's eyes fluttered open revealing her forest green eyes. They were glossy and slightly red, Jonathan's heart cracked slightly seeing her that way. "You need to rest Soph, you still don't look good." He told her softly with a sigh as he pushed her down to lay on her back.

Sophie nodded her head weakly as Jonathan stood up from his bed and covered Sophie with a blanket. Sophie sighed as she sank into the covers of Jonathan's bed, enjoying how comfortable it was. His lips curled up slightly into a small smile as he watched her breathing slow and how calm she became. He sat down on the edge of the bed again making sure that she was asleep. He moved some of her hair out of her face and admired her. She was beautiful to Jonathan, as to many others, and he loved her personality. He always questioned why Sophie had befriended him when they were twelve, he was just as weird back then as he is now. What did she like about him?

"You know it's kind of creepy to stare at someone while they try to sleep." Sophie's teasing voice broke Jonathan out of his thoughts. Seeing Sophie's mischievous green eyes through the covers Jonathan stood up quickly. She giggled slightly turning on her side to face him. Jonathan stood awkwardly next to the side of the bed with his cheeks burning as he looked anywhere but the giggling girl on the bed in front of him.

"S-Sorry," Jonathan apologized. "I'll j-just go, feel better," Jonathan said hurriedly before leaving the bedroom closing the door. Sophie

continued to giggle as she laid on her back again staring at the plain white ceiling before sighing and calming herself down. But she just couldn't sleep with the thought of Will being trapped in her mind.

Maybe she didn't have to go outside to look for Will. Sitting up slowly Sophie looked outside to see that it was just starting to become dark. Sure she hadn't done anything like this in a long time, but it was worth a shot. Biting her lip Sophie came to a conclusion.

**Word Count: 3634**

**Completed: 7/11/17**

## 4. Chapter Four

### IT'S BACK

**SOPHIE SAT ON JONATHAN'S BED, SHE SAT** with her legs crossed while she stared at the wall in front of her. Slowing her breathing she focused on using her energy to look for Will, to find him. She dug deep within her to use the powers she swore never to use again. Focusing on the search of Will, Sophie sighed as she fell deeper within herself.

It was dark.

There was nothing in this void. The ground appeared to be covered in shallow water, though Sophie couldn't feel it on her feet. It was a strange feeling she hadn't felt in years. Sophie focused, disregarding the horrible feeling of nostalgia creeping up in her mind, and started looking for Will. Or maybe even a sign of him.

If she didn't find any sign of him there then it would mean one of two things: Will wasn't stuck in that terrible place, or he was... dead. Sophie ran into the void looking and listening hard for Will and his heartbeat. Her feet splashing the water underneath her feet. She could hear the faint sound of a heartbeat, along with ragged breathing. "Will!" She shouted out in the void. The heartbeat she heard got louder, choosing a direction Sophie ran as fast as she could hoping to find Will.

Sophie ran through the void still looking for Will, but couldn't find anything besides a heartbeat and what could be his breathing. But then she heard it. The low inhuman growl. She froze in her spot.

She bottom lip trembled as she looked around frantically for the faceless creature. Yet she was still faced with black nothingness. She felt like a defenseless child again, lost and scared of the dark. She swallowed thickly as she turned around again. And there it was.

It stood maybe six feet tall, grey leathery like skin and its mouth took up its entire face. When it opened its mouth it had five flaps covered in sharp teeth that Sophie knew all too well. It almost looked like a

tulip, a very creepy and deformed tulip. Sophie's eyes widened as she stared at it in horror. It reached out with its long arms and its claws wrapped around Sophie's upper arm. Finding her voice Sophie did what any normal person would, she screamed.

While Sophie was searching the void for Will, Joyce and Jonathan sat on the couch looking for a picture to use for a missing person poster. There were so many pictures on the table, and after looking at all of them they had decided on one that was perfect. Even though tears were shed and Jonathan continued to blame himself the two of them cried on each other's shoulders.

Then the phone rang.

Joyce ran over to the phone quickly answering it. "Hello? Hello? Lonnie?" Joyce asked as she heard only static.

"Dad?" Jonathan muttered as he sat on the couch watching his mother talk on the phone.

"Hopper? Who is this?" Joyce asked before she hears breathing on the other end of the call, "Will? Will?"

"It's Will? Mom, it's Will?" Jonathan asked worried as he walked over to stand by his mother who was listening to the static and breathing on the other end of the line.

"Who is this? What have you done to my boy?" Joyce asked her voice starting to rise in volume.

"What? What?" Jonathan continued to question.

"Give me back my son!" Joyce exclaimed before screaming as the phone created an electrical shock against her causing her to drop the phone.

"Hello? Hello, who is this? Hello? Who is this?" Jonathan asked frustrated as he picked up the phone and tried to get an answer. He put the phone back into the receiver before turning to his mother who was beginning to sob. "Mom, who was it? Who was it, Mom?"

"It was him," Joyce exclaimed through her sobs as Jonathan grabbed

her shoulders.

"Look at me, Mom. Was it Will?" Jonathan asked desperately.

"Yes." Joyce cried.

"What did he say?" Jonathan asked.

"He just breathed. He just breathed." Joyce said as she tried to grab the phone again sobbing.

"And was someone else there?" He asked his hysterical mother who stammered over her words. "Mom, who was there? Who was it?"

"It was him. I know it was his breathing. I know it was his breathing." Joyce replied sobbing as the two hugged each other.

After Joyce answer, the two averted their attention to the scream that they heard from Jonathan's room.

Jonathan and Joyce ran into Jonathan's room to find Sophie laying on his bed. She was shaking and breathing heavily as she laid on her back. Jonathan quickly made his way to her side, sitting on the bed, and saw that her eyes were closed. "Soph! Soph! Sophie!" Jonathan exclaimed as he shook her.

Sophie sat up quickly breathing heavily with tears in her eyes. Her eyes were filled with terror, Jonathan noted. He pulled her into a hug seeing that she needed it, she didn't hug back. She sat not moving beside her chest that was irregularly moving against him. Her breathing was ragged almost like wheezes. Jonathan recognized it right away and knew what to do. He let go of their hug and placed both of his hands on the side of her head.

"Calm down Sophie, you're fine I'm right here." He said forcing her to look at him in the eyes, tears fell from her eyes as she looked at him blankly, like she was looking through him. He shivered seeing the empty look in her eyes. He kept his hands on the side of her head holding her gently as he tried to show her how to steady her breathing.

"It's back... It's back..." Sophie muttered as fear gripped her voice,

much to Jonathan's confusion.

Jonathan cooed sweet things to her trying to stop her panic attack. Her body was shaking against his as she tried to calm herself down by listening to Jonathan. After a few minutes, Sophie had finally calmed down and was just about ready to pass out. She felt a warm liquid leak out of her nose and onto her upper lip. But too exhausted to do anything she passed out into Jonathan's arms.

Jonathan supported Sophie before she could fall and gently laid her back onto the bed. Once he placed her down and saw that blood was starting to leak out of her nose and the corners of her eyes. Alarmed Jonathan looked to his mother who was still crying due to what happened to the phone. Joyce looked at Sophie and quickly tried to calm herself down before heading out of her son's room and went to look for the first aid kit.

Once Joyce left to look for the medical supplies Jonathan looked down at his best friend who was unconscious on his bed. More blood began to pour out of her nose and the corners of her eyes, it looked like she was crying. Jonathan held her hand in his own as he watched her shake and breath unsteadily.

"What's wrong Soph?" He muttered brushing some of her long black hair out of her face. He continued to stare at her until he noticed that her shirt was ripped.

There were four different tears in her shirt, on her upper arm, and blood seeped out of her shoulder. Jonathan's eyes widened as Joyce came back into the room with the right supplies.

Joyce worked on cleaning up the blood from Sophie's face and bandaged up her shoulder. Joyce had given Jonathan questioning looks mentally asking him where she might have gotten the injuries. But Jonathan had no clue.

"She was fine when I left her here to rest. She wasn't bleeding then." Jonathan said in a slightly panicked tone.

"Just... let her rest for now. Don't wake her up... we all need rest..." Joyce trailed off as she finished putting the bandages on Sophie's

shoulder. Jonathan nodded his head as he watched Joyce leave the bedroom. Her feet dragging on the floor as tears still filled her eyes. She was still shaken up by the phone call. She headed out of the bedroom and walked out into the kitchen. Looking for the spare phone quickly so she could call the police station and try to get Jim.

Jonathan sat on the edge of the bed as he watched Sophie sleep. What the hell happened to her? He pondered. No one else was in the room, nobody could have gotten into the room. If someone did, he thinks that he and Joyce would have noticed someone getting in. But then who would want to hurt Sophie, especially like this!?

It aggravated him to no end. First, his brother goes missing and now the girl he lo- his best friend is hurt. Jonathan stared at Sophie in concern before taking hold of her hand.

"I'll make sure that you're okay Sophie. I'll protect you." He muttered to her before placing a sweet kiss on the top of her hand.

Joyce came back into the bedroom to see how Sophie was doing. She stood in the doorway looking at the unconscious teen and Jonathan who sat holding her hand in worry. Joyce smiled lightly at the sight before clearing her throat. Jonathan looked up before coughing and looking back to Sophie as his face heated up, but he didn't let go of her hand.

"Jonathan you need to go to sleep," Joyce sniffled. Jonathan looked back up to Joyce's disheveled and emotional figure nodding his head slowly.

"I will soon mom. I'm just going to make sure Sophie's okay." Jonathan said as he forced the best reassuring smile he could. Joyce returned the smile, though it looked more like a grimace, as she turned around with a 'good night' and went to her bedroom. Jonathan didn't leave Sophie's side the rest of the night. He continued to whisper reassuring things to Sophie, despite him knowing that she wouldn't hear him. But by around two in the morning he had finally fallen asleep on the floor while he leaned on the bed. Still holding Sophie's hand.

Sophie woke up groaning as her head pounded and it felt like it was

filled with water. Though for all she knew it was really blood. Her vision cleared as she stared at the ceiling, but it wasn't the one in her room. Looking around she saw that she was in Jonathan's bedroom, confused Sophie sat up slightly before feeling movement next to her. She saw that Jonathan was on the side of the bed, asleep, and holding her hand.

Sophie stared in confusion and began to become flustered. Ignoring the fluttering feeling in her stomach Sophie removed her hand from his, now missing the warmth it brought her, and carefully got out of the bed. She stood still as Jonathan stirred slightly before settling back into a comfortable position. Sophie sighed before grabbing her jacket and walking out of Jonathan's bedroom, closing the door.

It was early morning, she could tell by how the sun had barely risen. She glanced at the clock to see that it was four in the morning. Sophie sighed. Heading into the kitchen she found a piece of paper and a pen starting to write a note on it.

She had to stop multiple times because her hand was trembling as the memories of last night resurfaced. And even after trying to calm herself down her handwriting looked horrible when compared to her original neat and cursive writing. She composed herself long enough to write a short letter to the Byers explaining where she was going and that she was fine.

Grabbing the rest of her things, Sophie made her way out of the Byers house and into the cool morning air. Starting to walk down the road towards her home Sophie watched the sky start to become baby blue and the stars disappearing completely. She quickly put on her jacket after becoming cold but had some difficulty. On closer inspection, she noticed the upper part of her shirt was ripped in four places, stained with red and she had bandages covering her shoulder. Her eyes widened as she stopped on the side of the road and pulled her shirt off her shoulder to take a closer look at the bandages.

She ran her fingers over the neatly wrapped bandages and flinched slightly still feeling sore and slight discomfort because of her wound. She sighed closing her eyes before shaking her head and fixing her shirt back over her shoulder, with caution. Sophie didn't remember much of last night only that she tried to find Will using her abilities,

but after that, it was a blur. She knew was that the creature, she dubbed tulip head, was somehow back. She faintly remembered Jonathan helping her breath properly and stop her panic attack, and then nothing.

Continuing her walk Sophie watched as leaves started to fall from the trees on the side of the road. Despite how pretty and innocent the woods looked like at this time of the year Sophie knew how sinister it really was. Clenching her jaw Sophie thought of how and why tulip head was back.

Six years. It had been six years since she last saw it, but now it wasn't helping her or saving her. It wasn't going to be her savior this time, it was hurting her. At this point, she knew that Will had been taken by the creature. He was still alive, at least for the most part. Why? Sophie had no clue, but she could only thank every god in existence that he was.

Jonathan woke up groggily. He shifted slightly burying himself into his covers more trying to fall back asleep. But he didn't feel Sophie's hand. Jonathan's head shot up as his eyes scoured the bedroom looking for his best friend. He saw that the covers on his bed were disheveled and misplaced from where Sophie original laid. His eyes widened as he stood up quickly in panic.

Where the hell did she go? He quickly opened his bedroom door with a loud thud and looked through the house. Bathroom? No. Living Room? No. Kitchen? No... but there was a letter that was on the kitchen table that Jonathan saw. He quickly snatched the paper into his hands a read it to himself.

*'Mrs. Byers and Jon,*

*I'm sorry I stayed overnight, I didn't mean to be a bother. I feel better than I did last night and I'm heading back to my place to get ready for school. Though I wouldn't keep your hopes high, Jon. I'm not sure whether or not I'll actually be there, might skip. Don't tell Jimmy I said that. But like I said I'm fine, nothing to worry about. And thanks for letting me stay by the way.*

*-Soph'*

Jonathan reread the note a few times. The handwriting was hard to read, and it was definitely contradictory to Sophie's cursive and neat handwriting. She must have been in a rush to write it, Jonathan concluded. But why would she leave so early and quickly? She didn't even wake him up to tell him.

She must be fine though if she wasn't then she would have stayed and told him. Jonathan reassured himself that Sophie was fine before heading to the fridge starting to get out the ingredients to make breakfast for himself and Joyce.

Soon his mother finally woke up, even though she still looked tired. Joyce was beyond stressed and barely got any sleep. She sat at the kitchen table while Jonathan finished up making breakfast for the two of them. She quickly lit a cigarette for herself, hoping to calm her down.

Sophie finally made it to her house after quite a long walk. Tired and in slight discomfort Sophie walked into the bathroom and stripped off her clothes. Sophie took off the bandage from her shoulder as well and threw the bloody bandages in the trash. Allowing the water to run over her body, Sophie let the warm water wash out some of the tension in her shoulders.

The water washed over her face as she sighed. She shuddered as she started to remember what exactly she saw last night. How was tulip head able to hurt her so badly like that? And how the hell did it get powerful enough to cross dimensions again!? Was it... did Eleven do this?

Even at a young age, Eleven was much more powerful than Sophie. It could have been possible that she allowed it to cross through a portal again. It was far more powerful than the one Sophie had encountered before. And now it's taken Will to the other place, who knows what it's doing to him. Was tulip head doing the same thing to Will as it did to her?

Sophie quickly brushed the thoughts off as she jumped out of the shower. She ran into her room to get changed before she had a panic attack in the bathroom. She got dressed in baggy clothes and laid down on her bed. Sighing she ran her hands over her face, closing

her eyes. "Why?" She choked out before breaking down in tears. She cried as quietly as she could, just in case Jim stopped by he wouldn't hear her.

Sophie wasn't sure how long she spent in her small room. She had cried for a while to the point where she couldn't cry anymore. She knew that it was mid-morning by now, and also knew that Jonathan would be worried if she didn't show up at school. Not caring what she really looked like, Sophie picked up her backpack and made her way outside to her bike. She quickly mounted her bike and started her ride to the high school.

She didn't really pay attention to her surroundings, the trees and buildings were just a blur to her as she rode along the road. Her hair flowing behind her like sheets in the wind, her red and puffy eyes watering at the speeds she was traveling at. She ignored just about everything that was around her, from the passing cars to the fallen branches next to the road. She nearly ran one over one and fell off her bike.

She didn't even notice the familiar car pull up beside her, "Soph."

Sophie looked up to the side to look at the car next to her. The driver rolled down the window and looked at the disheveled teen in concern. "Oh, hey Jon..."

**Word Count: 3111**

**Completed: 9/27/17**

## 5. Chapter Five

### CONCERN

**JONATHAN DROVE UP SLOWLY ON THE SIDE** of the road to see his best friend riding her bike. He took in her disheveled appearance. Her hair was a mess, her clothes were wrinkled and baggy on her and they didn't even look like her clothes. His eyebrows furrowed as he noticed that they looked more like men's clothes than women's. Where did she get men's clothes like that, Jonathan thought.

On closer inspection, he saw that her eyes were slightly red and puffy like she was crying. He stared worried and concerned at her as she came to a stop on her bike. "You all right Soph?"

"Yeah, yeah." She swallowed thickly resting on her bike as she tried her best to compose herself and smirked at her best friend. "Why? You think something's wrong."

Her act didn't go past Jonathan however, he was able to see right through her. Something happened, whether it was from last night or something else he doesn't know. "You don't look okay Soph," he told her as she got off her bike so she could lean down to look into the window of the passenger seat. "And with what happened last night..." Jonathan trailed off reminding her of what happened.

Sophie stiffened at the mention of the night before quickly trying to ignore the feeling of dread that bubbled up in her. "Last night?" She asked pretending to be in thought, "I don't remember much of last night." She feigned cluelessness, "I think I passed out."

"You didn't just pass out Soph, you were bleeding," Jonathan said concerned as he watched her stiffen at the mention of last night. There was something wrong with her, Jonathan observed. She was hiding something from him and he wasn't sure what it was. But he knew it had to do with last night.

Soph quickly looked down at her wrist, pretending she had a watch. "Oh, if we don't hurry we'll be late for school!" Sophie said as she backed away from Jonathan's car. "I'll see you there!" She exclaimed

mounting her bike and started to pedal again.

"Soph!" Jonathan yelled after her as she rode off. He quickly put his car into drive and drove beside her, "Soph! Sophie!"

She turned and smiled at her best friend before riding faster down a shortcut she would take to get to the Wheeler's house. Though it would only be for desperate times, seeing as it was through the woods. Jonathan stopped the car huffed in annoyance as he watched Sophie ride her bike down the trail. Sophie soon disappearing into the tall trees and greenery of the forest.

Jonathan sighed slumping into his seat and resting his head on the steering wheel. Sophie was most definitely hiding something from him. He clenched his jaw as he began to drive the car again towards the high school. As he continued to drive he wondered what was going on with Sophie. Especially after what he just witnessed her do. He was concerned for his best friend immensely and had the thought of going out on foot to follow her on her bike.

But he knew Sophie well, she didn't like it when people tried to get into her business. Especially when she appeared to be emotional, if someone did Jonathan knew how she could lash out at someone. He was once the recipient of her rage once when they were younger. But this was something serious, extremely serious. Jonathan sighed again as he drove up the street almost to the school parking lot. He'll figure something out.

Sophie rode in the woods to her best ability. She rode as fast as she could through the forest, nearly missing fallen branches and roots in the ground. The forest seemed to be suffocating her as she tried to keep her breathing under control. She definitely was not having a panic attack while she was in the forest, alone. She bared through the horrendous ride, the darkness of the forest seems to darken. Her eyes watered as she soon saw the light at the end of the trail leading right to the cul de sac that the Wheelers household is on.

She came to a stop at the edge of the forest and nearly collapsed. Her clothes had become ragged and dirty. Tears and rips littered her shorts and a baggy shirt, she had cuts on her legs and arms. And there was an assorted amount of leaves and small twigs in her tangled black hair. She tried to calm down her heavy and erratic

breathing.

Sophie was finally able to calm herself down, if she hadn't she most likely would have thrown up. She finally was able to see clearly and stop her shaking. She got back onto her bike and rode down the street, passing a few struggling students who were trying to get to school on time.

Nancy, Barb, Steve, Tommy, and Carol stood in the hallway. The hall was full of fellow high school students trying to get to their lockers or classes before the morning bell rang. The group stared at Jonathan Byers who had just walked into the school. His shoulders hunched as usual, but what was unusual was that Sophie Hopper was not with him. Even Tommy, Carol, and Steve had to admit it was completely out of character to see him without Sophie. Those two were attached to the hip and spent any time they could together. Even though most of the time Jonathan would just follow Sophie around as a lost puppy. And they thought that it was pathetic that Jonathan was on his own.

He walked over to the pinboard that was near the entrance of the school and picked up a few thumbtacs. He took out one of the missing posters he had just finished printing out earlier. He neatly pinned it on the board, the picture of his smiling younger brother looking back at him.

Unknown to Jonathan the group of five continued to stare at him. "God that's depressing," Steve noted.

"Should we say something?" Nancy asked the others worried for Jonathan. Seeing as Sophie wasn't with him she knew something was wrong. And now with his brother missing Nancy could only imagine what he's going through.

"I don't think he speaks," Carol said without a care.

Tommy smirked observing the other teen, "how much you want to bet he killed him?" Steve turned and glared at his friend before shoving him in the shoulder, seeing the look on Nancy's face.

"Shut up."

Nancy looked back at Jonathan before sighing and making her way from her group of "friends" and over to Jonathan. "Hey," she greeted him once she got close enough.

Jonathan jumped slightly and turned to see Nancy Wheeler was the one who greeted him. It was slightly surprising to him to see that she came to talk to him on her own. He had spoken to Nancy before, but that was usually when she came to ask about Sophie or when Sophie forced the two to talk to each other.

"Oh, hey."

"I just..." Nancy stuttered slightly, "I wanted to say, you know, um... I'm sorry about everything." Nancy said before Jonathan glanced at the four others who were standing behind them, Nancy following his gaze. "Everyone's thinking about you. It sucks."

"Yeah."

Nancy swallowed, "I'm sure he's fine. He's a smart kid." The bell for school then rang, everyone started to make their way to their classes as Nancy still stood with Jonathan. "I have to go. Chemistry test."

"Yeah," Jonathan said awkwardly still not sure of what to say.

"Good luck," Nancy said just as awkwardly backing up from Jonathan.

"Thanks."

Nancy stopped as Jonathan turned to make sure that the poster he put of was placed perfectly. "Um, Jonathan?"

He turned back around to face Nancy, wondering what else she had to say to him, "yeah?"

Nancy Gripped her books to her chest, "have you see Soph, I thought she'd come to school with you. But she obviously didn't."

Jonathan stared at her for a minute in confusion, Sophie wasn't here? Granted in the letter she left his house she did say she might skip school. But when he saw her only about twenty minutes ago she was

heading in the direction of the school. Where could she have gone?

"I saw her riding her bike here about twenty minutes ago. I don't know where she is now."

Nancy nodded her head, said thanks and followed after her small group of friends towards their class. Jonathan tried to ignore the glances he was getting from them. He quickly turned around and made his way out of the school and towards his car. He looked around as he walked, hoping to catch a glimpse of his best friend. But he didn't see her. Not even her bike was on the rack. He started to worry slightly but brushed off the feeling.

Sophie could take care of herself right now if something else happens she would tell him. Yeah, she would tell him... but where was she?

Sophie rode her bike aimlessly around town. Almost getting hit by a few cars a couple of times. She rode trying to clear her mind, but just like when she would run her mind constantly wandered. She thought about what was happening to Will right now. What was tulip-head was doing to him?

God, she wished she knew. And right now there was no way of telling, especially after what happened to her last night. She wasn't ready to use her power like that any time soon. At least until she built up the courage to try again.

Then she thought about what her other friends might be thinking right now. Barb and Nancy would probably be wondering where she was. Maybe they thought she was out doing her own search for Will or just skipping school. Which she is.

What about Jonathan? He witnessed one of her freakouts after using her powers. He noticed her bleeding and the cuts she got from tulip-head after it hurt her while she was looking for Will. Then her just running off from him earlier. He probably thought she was crazy, well crazier than usual. But the look of concern that he gave her, the comforting words she remembered him saying last night to calm her down brought a warm feeling to her stomach. He was so caring and nice towards her, always looking out for her no matter what. And she wondered what she did for him to ever repay him back for it...

Then there was Will, Dustin and Lucas. She wondered what they were doing right now. Most likely trying to find Will themselves, or moping around about him being gone. And who could blame them for that. She doubted if they even cared where she was right now, they would definitely be more concerned about Will right now.

She rode her bike slowly along the sidewalk, and she noticed Mrs. Wheeler drive by in her car. Mrs. Wheeler waved towards Sophie who returned it with a convincing smile. As her car drove passed Sophie, she couldn't help but notice someone on a bike ride from behind a few trees and towards the col de sac.

Sophie's eyebrows furrowed as she watched the person ride their bike. Recognising the bike and the black haired boy riding it. Sophie stopped her bike as she watched Mike ride back towards his house. "Huh... what are you doing Mike?" She muttered to herself before following after Mike back to his house.

She quickly rode to his house and walked up to the front door of the house. She knocked on the door seeing if Mike would actually answer the front door, even if it was her. She listened intently as she heard shuffling from the other side of the door. She could hear Mike talking frantically from inside, she sighed just about ready to open the door herself. She thought about what she should do for a minute, but before she could come to a complete decision the door suddenly opened. It startled her slightly as she stared wide-eyed at Mike who only opened the door enough for her to just see him.

"Soph?" He asked surprised, "what are... you doing here?" He asked innocently trying to keep her from seeing inside. He could only imagine what would happen if she found El in his house. Sophie's eyes narrowed as she could see through his lie. Being such a good liar like herself she was able to tell whenever anyone else was lying, their little ticks and quirks that they did when they were nervous and lying. For Mike, it was his stuttering and an urgency to leave the conversation.

"Hey, Mike?" Sophie asked with pursed lips and narrowed eyes. Mike squirmed slightly under her intimidating and calculating stare. "What are you doing here?"

"What do you mean?" He squeaked, "I'm here because I live here."

"Yeah, I get that. But shouldn't you be at school?" Sophie asked with a challenging brow raise.

Mike gulped, "Well, I'm sick. What about you, shouldn't you be at school?"

Sophie stared at him with a tilted head and sighed. "I'm skipping today, some... stuff happened to me last night. I needed some time to think and calm down." She said vaguely as Mike stared at her with furrowed eyebrows. She sighed, "besides I skip sometimes, but you," Sophie poked the younger boy in the chest. "Are not supposed to skip, you're smarter than that. And you don't look sick at all." She said placing the back of her hand on his forehead.

Mike's face heated up as he pushed her hand away and tried to keep her from seeing into his home. "I am! My throat was scratchy and my head hurt." He tried to lie.

Sophie sighed, "looked Mike, I know you're lying about being sick." Mike's eyes widened as his breath hitching. He knew he wouldn't be able to lie to Sophie, she knew when he'd be lying no matter what he does. "I get that it's hard with Will gone, and I understand you wanting to be alone and whatnot." Mike sighed, realising that she didn't think anything was wrong. "Just know that you've got friends to talk to." Mike nodded his head as Sophie sighed running a hand through her hair. "Well I should go, your sister might be wondering where I am and if I hurry I might make it in time for our chemistry test."

Mike nodded his head and watched as Sophie made her way towards her bike and picked it up from the ground. Mike started to close the door, nearly home free when Sophie stopped him. "Mike!" He looked at the teenager who smirked mischievously, "make sure that you and your friend go to school tomorrow." Mike stared at her in disbelief, there was no way she knew about El being in there. "I'm just saying, you and your friend shouldn't miss more than two days of school, that's my thing."

Sophie laughed before taking off on her bike. Mike watched her go

before he quickly closed the door and faced Eleven. "Don't worry, it was just my friend Sophie." He explained to her as she stared at him with a confused look, "she was just making sure that I was okay."

Jonathan drove in his car down the long stretch of land. The radio one of the only things heard besides the roar of the engine. A song had just ended as he focused looking on the road when another song came on. The all too familiar guitar riff beginning to fill the car, "Darling you've got to let me know." Jonathan listened as he started to reminisce in a memory.

*Jonathan and Will sat on Jonathan's bed and bobbed their heads to the beat of 'should I stay or should I go' by the Clash. "You like it?" Jonathan asked his younger brother with a smile.*

*"Yeah it's cool," Will said excitedly as he continued to listen to the song his brother had put on.*

*"Alright, you can keep the mix if you want."*

*"Really?"*

*"Yeah, really." Jonathan told Will with a smile before continuing over the loud music, "all the best stuff's on there. Joy Division, Bowie, Television, The Smiths... it'll totally change your life."*

*Will smiled, "yeah, totally."*

*The two then heard Joyce from outside the room, she was on the phone yelling at Lonnie, their father, for not coming to Hawkins to spend time with Will. Despite him saying that he would. Will's smile fell as he looked out of the bedroom towards his mother yells. Annoyed, Jonathan quickly stood up and shut his bedroom door.*

*Jonathan lowered the music and turned to Will, "he's not coming, is he?" Will asked disappointedly.*

*"Do you even like baseball?"*

*"No, but, I don't know it's fun to go with him sometimes." Will tried to explain, even though he and Jonathan both knew that it wasn't true.*

"Come on." Jonathan said, "has he even done anything with you that you actually like? You know, like the arcade of something?"

"I don't know."

"No, all right? He hasn't. He's trying to force you to like normal things. And you shouldn't like things because people tell you you're suppose to." Jonathan finished his little speech, "okay? Especially not him." Will nodded his head, understanding what Jonathan was saying. "But you like The Clash? For Real?" He asked with a small smile.

"For real. Definitely." Will smiled brightly. Jonathan returned it before leaning over to his radio and cranked up the volume.

"Should I cool it or should I blow?" The song continued as they began to dance and bop along to the beat

The door then opened slightly and a black head of hair popped into the room. The two boys still hadn't noticed the girl, who now smiled mischievously. She quietly entered the bedroom and made her way towards the boys. She snuck up behind the two boys, who still hadn't noticed her, and she jumped onto the bed shouting.

The two boys yelled, Will even fell off of the bed. She laughed at the shock and flustered faces of her two friends. Will, who was still sitting on the ground, started to laugh too. Sophie now laid on Jonathan's bed, spread out on her back as she continued to laugh loudly. Jonathan glared at the girl playfully, only for her to stick out her tongue at him. Jonathan huffed before he started to tickle the girl on his bed.

Sophie yelped and squirmed under the boy as he held her wrist with one hand and tickled her stomach with the other. "Jon! Jonathan, stop!" She laughed. She continued to squirm and trying to get out of his hold, "Will! Help me!" Will continued to watch the two teens and laughed harder before helping his brother by holding down her arms and letting Jonathan use both of his hands. "You little asshole!"

The two brothers continued to tickle Sophie to the point where her face was almost completely red from laughing. Jonathan and Will finally stopped tickling the poor girl, who was breathing very heavily trying to regain her breath. "I hate you two sometimes," Sophie said trying to be

*angry, but a smile slowly crept its way onto her lips.*

*"No, you don't!" Will giggled sitting properly on the bed again, next to Sophie who still laid on the bed.*

*"It's true!" Sophie exclaimed, before glancing towards Jonathan who was sitting at the end of the bed. He watched how she laughed and horsed around with his brother. A small smile graced his face as he observed how her midnight black hair glowed in the light that was pouring in through the window. As he continued to admire her she pounced on him unexpectedly. She quickly sat up and tackled Jonathan so he was laying on the bed and started to tickle him as well. "Ha!"*

*The three friends laughed with each other, happy to be in each others company. And once Sophie had finally gotten her revenge on Jonathan and Will, they danced around to a few songs of Jonathan's mixtape.*

Jonathan continued to drive down the long stretch of road. The happy memory of him with both his brother and best friend replayed in his mind. Along with a few other memories that replayed. And he soon drove past a sign.

LEAVING

HAWKINS

COME AGAIN SOON'

Sophie walked into Hawkins High School. The halls were nearly completely empty, besides a few other students with hall passes. And as she passed by a few of the other students they stared after her. The cuts and bruises were a normal sight to see on her, everyone knew that she tended to get into fights. But the baggy men's clothes, torn and the few leaves in her hair were strange. And they could even see the bandages that patched up her shoulder too.

She walked along the halls, she noticed that it must have been fourth period, chemistry for her. She walked to her locker and put her backpack in there before taking out her books. She headed to her chemistry classroom, picking out a few leaves and twigs from her hair on the way there. She finally got to her classroom before

opening the door.

Her peers stared at the door once it was opened. They all stared at Sophie Hopper. They looked her over, seeing her clothes that looked to be two, maybe three sizes, too big for her. Her arms and legs were almost completely covered in various cuts ranging in sizes. And her straight black was tangled and a mess, it looked like she just climbed out her bed.

"What?" Sophie growled at everyone's shocked looks before walking over to her desk that was in front of Nancy's. Said girl stared at one of her best friends in shock. She wasn't only shocked by her clothes, but also by the fact that she was even here. Nancy was sure that Sophie was skipping today after Jonathan told her that she wasn't at school that morning.

The teacher even starred shocked, but his shock soon turned into annoyance. "So glad to see that you've actually come join us." His bored voice drawled out. "I'm glad that you like this class enough to not skip it."

Sophie smiled sarcastically, "you know me, Mr. Q, chemistry is my favorite!" She huffed before sinking into her chair.

Mr. Quinn rolled his eyes before turning back to the board, continuing to explain how important the test that they were about to take. Nancy stared at the back of her friends head, debating whether or not she should talk to her. Nancy sighed before leaning forward and tapping Sophie on the shoulder.

Sophie huffed and turned around with a scowl, completely forgetting that Nancy was the one who sat behind her. "Yes?" She asked harshly.

Nancy stared at Sophie with wide eyes, seeing how brash and irritated she was. "You okay Soph?" Nancy asked concerned. Sophie sighed nodding her head.

"Yeah, I'm fine Nanc. Nothing to worry about." Sophie plastered her most reassuring smile before turning back around as Mr. H started to hand out the tests.

"Remember this test makes up 30% of your total grade, and I'd love to see a few of you for a second year in this class." He finished sarcastically as Sophie finally got the test and looked it over, "you can start."

Sophie sat and stared at the test for a minute, she had better things to be doing right now. For all, she knew people's lives were at stake including Will's, who was in the most danger. Sophie quickly answered all the questions that she knew, scribbling down answers to the short answers and filling in the multiple choice answers. After a few minutes, she finally answered all of the questions with what she knew were the right answers.

Sophie swiftly stood up from her desk and walked to the front of the class. Other students stopped what they were doing and watched as Sophie swaggered to the front of the class and placed the test on Mr. H's desk. Said man stared up at Sophie with a bored expression and looking down at the finished test in front of him.

"It's only been five minutes Miss. Hopper, did you guess on all of the questions?"

Sophie flashed him a sarcastic smile, "something like that. Can I go?"

Mr. H sighed taking the test and pulling out a pen to correct her test, "go ahead, I'll be looking forward to seeing you in this class again next year."

Sophie huffed before marching out of the classroom and walking down the hallway heading outside towards her bike. Mr. H sat at his desk flipping through Sophie's test, ready to give her a failing grade. But as he continued to correct each question his eyebrows furrowed. He flipped to the final page and read the final short answer and stared at the unmarked paper. He stared with wide eyes. He marked the top of Sophie's test with her grade, '100%'.

A few hours past and Sophie was now in her bedroom. Sophie laid on her back she contemplated what she should do. Whether she should use her ability again to try and look for Will, or she should just go out into the woods herself and look. She knew that if she did use her abilities there was a possibility that she could get hurt again. Possible

even kill herself with how weak she was and how strong tulip-head now was. Going out into the woods herself would also be a problem, especially after how she reacted to the woods this morning. She could have a panic attack again, maybe it would be worse than the one this morning.

But as Sophie continued to debate what she should do the phone rang. She sighed before getting up from her bed and heading towards the living room. She picked up the phone, "Kon'nichiwa, nani o shitaidesu ka?"

"Soph, you know I don't understand you when you speak Japanese," Nancy said from the other side.

Sophie chuckled. "I know, I do that hoping whoever called would just hang up." She shrugged, "so what do you want?"

"Well, are you doing anything tonight?"

"Uh," *I was probably going out into the woods to search for Will and hope I don't have a panic attack.* "Nothing, why?"

"Good," Nancy let out a sigh of relief, "cause I need you to come to my house for dinner."

"I ask again, why?"

Nancy hesitated before clearing her throat, "well this morning Steve invited me to a party at his house tonight." She started to explain causing Sophie's eyebrows to raise. "And well, I didn't want to go alone so I'm asking if you wanted to go."

Sophie hummed in acknowledgment, "what about Barb?"

"She's going to, well I hope. She'll have to be our ride to his house."

"And what are you going to tell your parents, cause Jimmy won't mind if I'm gone. Knowing him he'll find himself a lady to bring over, I definitely don't want to be here for that." Sophie shuddered.

"I'll tell them that you and I are staying at Barb's house, and Barb will tell her parents that she's staying at my house."

Sophie thought for a moment and sighed, "I don't know Nancy..." She trailed off.

"Soph, come on." Nancy whined, "It'll be fine, besides at school you looked more..." She paused thinking of the right word, "distant than you usually do. A party might help your mood."

Sophie thought about it for a moment, would that be a good idea? She could wind down a bit at this party, hang out with Barb. She knew that Nancy and Steve would be sucking each other's faces the entire night, she didn't have to be psychic to know that. And his house is in the woods, right, if she got bored she could always ditch the party and go out on her own search party for Will.

Sophie cringed and sighed, "fine, fine. I'll go." Nancy squealed, "but it's only to make sure you're not going to be an idiot, okay, you definitely don't want to drink too much, hangovers can be a bitch."

Nancy laughed and dance slightly in victory, "okay well get your ass over here, mom's making dinner right now. And I have to call Barb to make sure that she's on board with this."

"Meaning you're going to try and guilt trip her into coming to pick us up." Sophie assumed lamely. Nancy was silent on the other end of the line as Sophie smirked. "That's exactly what you were going to do."

"Shut up, just get here soon." And with that Nancy hung up the phone.

Sophie shook her head before putting the phone back onto the receiver and heading to her room to grab a few of her things. After retrieving a few things Sophie quickly made her way out of the trailer and to her bike.

**Written: 10/30/17**

**Word Count: 4826**